

ONE BREAD ONE BODY



Bishop Daniel Thiagarajah and The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams

East meets West

The Most Rev Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Head of the Worldwide Anglican Communion spelt in clear terms that no church or priest would run away from people in need whether they were Dalits, disabled or of other faiths and that would be the most important thing to be said about the Church.

He made this strong emphasis while addressing a public reception accorded to him by the Diocese of Madras (Chennai) of the Church of South India Sunday October 17.





Known for his clear and steadfast views on several key and challenging issues, conflicts and controversies of the day, he was forthright in his observations on how the church must boldly face up to the challenges before us especially where it's leadership is needed most.

He stressed the need for churches to speak to one another and to listen to the words of the other faiths to help bring mutual trust and realize the fullness of the Christian truth.

“Though churches might like to believe they had assimilated the fullness of Christian faith,” he warned, “none of the churches alone can preach the whole gospel.”



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“The reality is that we need one another’s gifts and to speak to one another. In fact, in the whole world of religious diversity we need to listen to the voices of other faiths without letting go of our own convictions,” said Rev Williams.

He observed a healthy church as a combination as much of congregational and Presbyterian functions as of pastoral care and evangelical encouragement. “Listening to others was central to pastoral responsibility,” he said..”

“The role of a bishop,” he emphasized, “is not one of power or domination but holding together the deep diversity and bringing out of it good news for every one of us.”

Dr Williams added that he believed there were two aspects of the character of God at the heart of every search for conducting a distinctive life. One was His faithfulness in not abandoning people in need and the other was abject humility.



“The important thing to be said about a church would be that it did not run away from people in need whether they were Dalits, disabled or people of other faiths, or even if these people did not call themselves Christians.”

Underscoring humility as a central trait for pastoral or Presbyterian leadership, Rev Williams said that when the Church is there for all, the Church has to be a humble institution willing to learn, sometimes even repent and be prepared not to be safe, wealthy or comfortable but always to love.

One of the speakers at this reception, M Ram, Editor in Chief of The Hindu described Archbishop Williams as a committed unifier and one who constantly expressed progressive positions on issues such as the war on Iraq, nuclear weaponization or obscurantist doctrines,

He concluded: “The visit to India by the Archbishop was one of progressive exploration of all values that are held dearly in India constitutionally and civilizationaly.

A former Governor of Orissa, M M Rajendran compared the message of the Archbishop to the Wall Street community about ethical economy and the importance of distributing accumulated wealth to Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of trusteeship He called upon the churches to work closely with the governments of various states and the NGOs to alleviate poverty and ensure that the benefits of development reached the marginalized sections of the country.



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Secretary JDCSI/ACM**Rev Rajkumar:
We pursue the
development of the
full human being.****An interview by Udara Soysa**

“We pursue the development of the full human being; man, woman or child and the spiritual is the key to it. We are all God’s children and we have to be totally committed to be good shepherds,” said the Rev I Rajkumar, the General Secretary of the Jaffna Diocese of the Church of South India (JDCSI), when asked about the church’s role in today’s circumstances in Sri Lanka especially in the war-torn areas.

The JDCSI under the leadership of the Rt Rev Dr Daniel Thiagarajah is the key NGO at the forefront of bringing now hope for the people of the Wannu where thousands of them are still unable to get back to their homes and resume their normal livelihoods. What the JDCSI is seeking is a companion socio-economic and cultural development programme to go parallel with the rehabilitation of the war-displaced families, and they are in their thousands.

When an entire region has suffered such awesome damage and with so much devastation over three decades, it is no easy task to help re-build hope, said the Rev Mr. Rajkumar, who has been working round the clock for many months now between his official functions and his parish responsibilities.

“It is incumbent on us to be role models, and people must have confidence in us and trust us and it is only then we can work as partners in this awesome struggle to create the right conditions for rehabilitation, reconstruction and reconciliation,” he said.

We face many problems on this path, he warned. “We have to be wary of “Showcase Rehabilitation and Reconciliation” panaceas for there are individuals and institutions, mostly the former, who see immense gains for them to placate their greed. We call them the Tsunami millionaires.”

The JDCSI has been great pioneers in the field of education and health services for nearly two centuries now first as the American Ceylon Mission which later fused into the national church. Its current call takes it into a crucial role of helping to revive a nation and bring new hope towards rehabilitation, reconstruction and real reconciliation,

The Rev Rajkumar concluded: “In this task we will not fail. Our pursuit for the good of the society is perpetual.”

From the Green Fields of Batticaloa to War-Torn Wanni



Pastor Selvantha from the Green Fields of the East joins us in the Wann
 “The sun rises in the East and when we sent an SOS to the Rev Selvantha who was working in the JDCSI parishes of the Eastern Province, to join us at war-devastated Mankulam, without even a murmur, he alighted as sure as the sun in the Wann and had to be contented with a roofless church damaged by the war,” said Dr Mrs Thaya Thiagarajah who heads the Healing Ministry of the JDCSI. She was speaking from Melbourne, Australia where she has been attending a seminar on Mental Health last week.



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“We have a team of great workers in the East headed by the Rev Ruben with the assistance of a senior pastor, the Rev Jerome Paul, the Rev Kiribainathan and two women workers, Indra and Chandralekha both specialists in working among marginalized communities,” observed Dr Mrs Thaya Thiagarajah.

The Rev Selvantha has been part of this ground-breaking dynamic team that has lived through the wreck and horrors of the tsunami, having himself been a tragic victim of it.

Dr Mrs Thiagarajah said that the growing demands in the north to help the war-affected people and the need for leaders and workers experienced in caring for those who have suffered the horrendous nature of the war made it necessary for us to invite the Rev Selvantha to Mankulam and team up with us in the Wannu.

This no doubt places a greater burden on the Rev Ruben who made a great impression when he addressed the Pastors’ Retreat held in Lindula recently marking the 5th anniversary of the bishopric of the Rt Rev Dr Daniel Thiagarajah. The Rev Ruban is also in charge of our ashram at Kiran.

“The Rev Selvantha will certainly miss the Green Fields of Batticaloa but he being the man that he is, we are sure, that it is only a matter of time before Wannu assumes its rightful green again as the granary of Sri Lanka,” concluded Dr Mrs Thiagarajah

Home Barns

Development: Let's begin in our backyards

By Victor Karunairajan



Every backyard in Jaffna homes
Even across peninsular bounds
Offers plenty of potential surely
In many developmental quests.

Cows or goats or a mix of them
Raised in barn style all the way
Garden plants and creeper veg
Our varieties are beyond belief.

Murunga need hardly any care
Stick them anywhere you want
Mango types are so incredible
With choice so unique globally.

Papaya yields are so incessant
What lovely breakfast delight
Nelli fruit gives you vitamin C
To keep away monsoon colds.

Tholagatty monks pioneered
A juicy tonic from these fruits
We must revive this industry
As a community co-op action.

Passion fruits, green oranges
Sweet sapodilla pinky janbus
Guava, lemons, pomgranate
If you like custard apples too.

Jaks from the towering trees
Even fallen leaves goats love.
Of course landmark palmyra
And heavenly palm cocomut.

Tasty vallarai near wellsides
Chandi trees on the fences
Wood apple loved so much
Source too for heathy tonic.

Chicken raised on the range
Provide eggs of great quality
Graze as they do in the yard
Also feed on grass and herb.

Morning milk freely fetched
Gives the family a good start
And all wastes from the barn
Are fed into the biogas plant.

In other words it really means
All energy needs of the home
Comes freely from our efforts
Managing a dynamic lifestyle.

Let us nourish our innate roots
From family to the community
In all action we be committed
In faith, hope and confidence.

Pursuits so pure and profound
Free from corruption and cons
Creating a future with visions
Within our reach most certain.

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Editor's Note: We are happy to note many of our readers writing to us acknowledging gratefully receipt of our monthly newsletter and some contributing their views. This is most welcome. Today we publish contributions from a senior writer Dr Pushpa Nesiah-Seevaratnam and the 12-year old Dylan J Machado, who has given us an insight into the life and time of Saint Andre, canonized a fortnight ago. This young lad has visited his church in Montreal. We are aware our newsletter is forwarded by many to others. We appreciate this gesture very much especially as a means to keep bonds alive and fresh. We are all one family under the leadership of the JDCSI.

The Second Calvary

When Jesus came on Christmas eve
With love in his heart to share,
And see how his children prepare to celebrate
His birthday with joy and care.

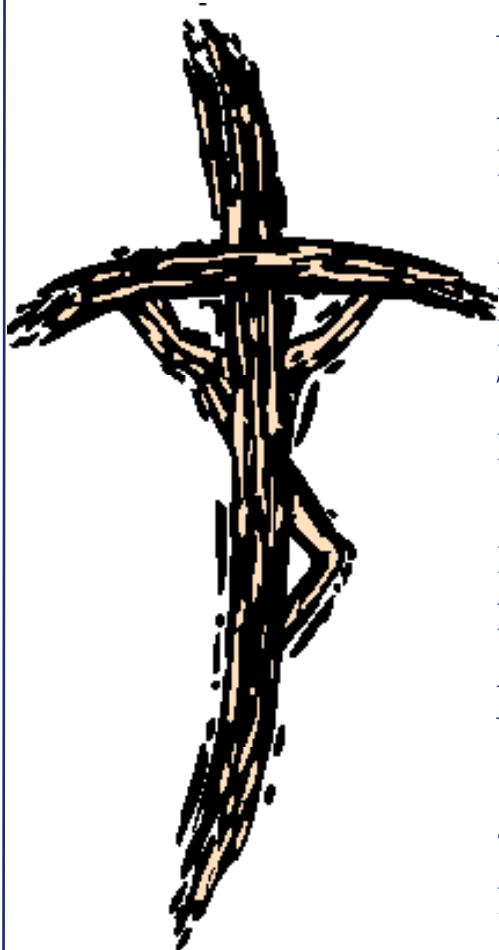
He stood beside the Highway alone
But no one glanced His way
Through rain and snow He waited long
But no no one cared what may.

He spent a lonely birthday out
In the cold and frosty rain,
After a while in despair He cried
With agony and pain.

“Father forgive them all
For they know not what they do”
And still it rained the winter rain
That drenched Him through and through.

His children went home
And left the street without a soul to see
While Jesus crouched against a wall
And cried for Calvary.

Dr Pushpa Nesiah-Seevaratnam



The Life of Saint André

By: Dylan J Machado

Many who are reading this article must have heard of the compassionate, Saint André. Please sit down and enjoy reading about this beloved saint. Alfred Bessette was born in Mont-Saint Grégoire, Québec, a compact town situated forty kilometers southeast of Montréal August 9, 1845. Alfred was born having a father, Isaac Bessette, a carpenter and lumberman and mother, Clothilde Foisy Bessette, He had several siblings.

When Alfred was born, he was debilitated; his parents thought he would die. Therefore, they baptized him promptly. But, luckily he did not die.

Alfred lived a terrible life during childhood. His father died in an accident and within three years of his death, his mother died of tuberculosis, an infectious disease caused by various strains of mycobacterium. Alfred was orphaned at the age of twelve. At thirteen, he wandered around incapably looking for jobs with a trivial amount of education. He found some jobs as a tinsmith, blacksmith, baker, shoemaker and wagon driver. As you can see, he worked hard to the bone during his childhood.

The Pastor of his parish, Father André Provençal, noticed his loyalty and the munificence of the young man. Consequently, he decided to present Alfred to the congregation of Holy Cross in Montréal,

Writing a note to the superior, Archbishop Ignace Bourget of Montréal he spoke on his behalf. In 1872, Alfred was accepted and he entered the novitiate of the assembly, receiving the religious name of Brother André. He made his final pledges on February 2, 1874 at the age of 28. He was given many duties at Notre Dame College in Côte-des-Neiges, Québec like: washing floors and windows, cleaning lamps, bringing and firewood and carrying messages. His great confidence in Saint Joseph inspired him to recommend this saint's dedication. On his many visits to the homes of the sick, he would advise them

to pray to St. Joseph and would anoint them lightly with oil from the lamp in the college chapel. People have claimed they have been cured through the prayers of Brother André and St. Joseph. They were delighted their prayers have been heard. But Brother

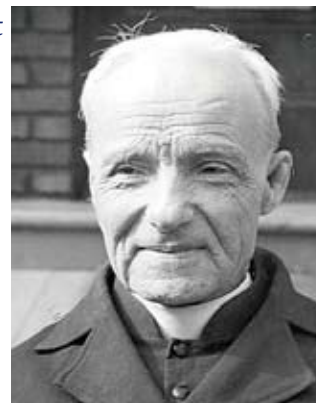
André refused to take any credit for those cures; he wanted St. Joseph to be honoured. In 1904, Brother André began the campaign to assemble a chapel to honour St. Joseph.

After those years, his popularity grew and grew as a miracle worker of Mount Royal. In 1924, Brother André started the construction of a basilica named, St. Joseph's Oratory, near Bessette's chapel.

Brother André died on January 6, 1937 at the age of 91. At his funeral, a million people filed past his casket. In the summer of 2007, my family and I visited St. Joseph's Church in Montréal and saw the

room where Saint André lived which was very cramped. We also attended the evening mass which was most inspiring.

Today, October 17, 2010, my family and I watched the canonization of Brother André. It was a breathtaking two and a half hour mass celebrated at St. Peter's Square in the Vatican City.



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I P Thuraiiratnam

A tower of integrity and vision

By Christie F J Richards, New York



I P Thuraiiratnam, administrator par excellence is remembered particularly for his efficiency, commitment to whatever he undertook, and the visions of goals that had to be pursued. He is often reminisced by his students, colleagues, friends and dear and near ones as a perfectionist even in his relationships.

Students who passed through his hands at Union College hardly spoke of him as a strict disciplinarian which he really was, but adored him as a third parent who expected the best in every one of them without exception.

Technically he taught math but in reality he taught just about every discipline from the classroom to the sports field and kept a wary eye on every student in how they related themselves to their peers, parents and the community.

He treated the college premises as one large family home of all the students and it was not strange that those in trouble sought help from Mrs Thuraiiratnam who enjoyed the status of a mother; after all Mr Thuraiiratnam was affectionately addressed as "Aiyah" by the students too.

One evening he walked into the house, obviously after some meeting and saw his youngest son at the dining table doing his homework. He saw something not quite right on the wall and asked him, "What's wrong with that picture?"

He promptly answered it was tilted on one side. He checked with him whether he had observed it earlier to which the poor fellow answered in the affirmative. What followed like a flash is something the youngster never forgot in his life and that made all the difference. This was the IPT trademark; perfection in everything. The poor youngster had the same experience in the cricket field too. After a fine innings at the wicket, virtually a grand salvage attempt, a momentary lack of concentration brought his innings to an end. IPT gave him his trademark reaction before congratulating him, thus harmonizing discipline with joy, the principal and the parent.

IPT as he was addressed by his peers was an educationalist, churchman and a community leader who lived most of his life in Tellipallai.

He had his own great hobbies; gardening being the principal one followed by photography and enjoyed a good family life married to a lovely lady, a Miss Hitchcock who was Rose acca to every one. She was the family ambassador and also knew every one of the students of her husband; and every one was special to them.

Bishop Sabapathy Kulandran was fortunate to have had around him some great colleagues and among them Mr Thurairatnam was one of the key persons. There were K A Selliah, Ariam Paramasamy, S V Alagaratnam, E J Jeyarajah, S S Selvadurai, Gnani Aseerwatham, Sevak Selvaratnam and others who were loyal to the church without question. They had their differences but their visions were focused on the well being of the church and the community.

Mr Thurairatnam was a teacher at Jaffna College when he was called to serve at Tellipallai where there were two institutions, a high school run by Jaffna College and a training college managed by the church. No sooner he went to Tellipallai he brought about an amalgamation of the two and thus was born Union College. It was no easy task.

So well established was this institution that people in the neighbouring areas felt there was a need for another educational institution, and soon Mahajana College came into being and between the two institutions headed by two friends, one a Christian and the other a Hindu there developed a very healthy rivalry.

IPT was the first national chairman of the American Ceylon Mission and helped to guide the mission enterprise to become a truly national institution. He gave character and pride to the leadership in this activity to the local people, so much so, the missionaries who came from the US looked up to him for guidance; his views were valued and trusted

IPT served the church in various capacities as a member of the Diocesan Council and its various boards and committees and also a member of the Board of Directors of Jaffna College. As much as a man of vision he was a man of action too.

As much as he tended every student of his, he gave the same loving care and kindness to his plants in the garden and obviously his special ones were the roses.

He was a tower of integrity and inspiration and such men are special gifts of the divine to humanity

BREAKING NEWS

Best Sub-Post Master/ Mistress Award

We are delighted to announce that the Best Sub Post Master/Mistress Award for Sri Lanka, marking this year's World Postal Day has been won by Mrs Thayanusha Rajkumar. This is the first time in thirty years this award has been won by a candidate for such an honour from the North. Thaya Rajkumar is one of the writers in the JDCSI Newsletter and also the Secretary of the JDCSI Women's Fellowship. A Sub-Post Mistress is an important service link between the government and the community at its grass roots.

We congratulate her for her exemplary public service.



ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS FOR PEACE



November 21, 2010 at 10 :30 AM
ST Kilda's Church East, Melbourne,
4 CHAPEL STREET, EAST ST. KILDA

All are welcome

Chief Guest: Dr. Mark Zirnsak

Director, Justice and International Mission,
UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Guest of Honour: Victor Karunairajan

Development Journalist and Author, Canada

Showcase reconciliation, a new fad

Editorial:

Beware of charming charlatans who see in every human misery an opportunity to placate their greed for power, dominance and material gains. These con artists have no scruples or values worth being recognized as representing anything well-intentioned for the public good.

Editorial:

Certain investigations conducted by a team, of which this writer was a part into how the tsunami disaster was used by some people to raise funds revealed some shocking details. They were clever and crafty with minds bent to go down to any level of deception to have their way.

One in particular was a housing project involving over seven hundred houses built for victims with a memorandum of understanding with the government. The one contracted it fraudulently represented himself as belonging to an institution that he had betrayed when he found himself in a situation of having to account for millions of rupees he had earlier collected in the name of that organization

Editorial:

However, the same person was able to convince a couple of institutions in the US that his integrity was beyond criticism or censure and he has the right to be financially supported.

A Dutch organization he had fooled for some years realized their mistake and made a public announcement as to why it had to snap all ties with him. Two US organizations who should know better, however still kowtow with him despite having no moral, ethical

or even legal reasons or obligations to give him succor.

The new fad that is beginning to show its foul head is "Showcase Reconciliation" among certain sections of the Diaspora. They see in this an opportunity to raise funds using the call for reconciliation in Sri Lanka as the theme of their efforts.

They hardly have any idea what reconciliation really means let alone reconstruction and rehabilitation in the Wannu. They are also unwilling to team up with people who are genuinely involved in doing something good for the people of Sri Lanka.

They want to blow their own trumpet when they cannot appreciate the harmonious musical rendering of an orchestra.

Those who understand the problems in Sri Lanka and especially the miseries the people of the Wannu have undergone will stage no "Showcase Reconciliation" shows of any kind.

It is unfortunate some foreign organizations are gullible to such machinations and accept those who can sycophant and play toady games as genuine.

When they realize their mistakes, the damage caused would have had devastating impacts on those who are genuinely involved in bringing about peace, amity and reconciliation in Sri Lanka and new life for the people of the Wannu.

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